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Makoto KIZAWATitle: PRINTING APPARATUS CAPABLE OF STORING
PRINT DATA IN APPARATUS MEMORY WITHOUT
REQUIRING BULK MEMORY

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

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APPLICATION ELEMENTS

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

1. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form
2. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 37]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
 - Descriptive title of the Invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the Invention
 - Brief Summary of the Invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) [Total Sheets 13]
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 3]
 - a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy) ☐ Unexecuted
 - b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 18 completed)
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SPECIFICATION

Title of the Invention :

**PRINTING APPARATUS CAPABLE OF STORING
PRINT DATA IN APPARATUS MEMORY WITHOUT
REQUIRING BULK MEMORY**

Inventor(s) :

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PRINTING APPARATUS CAPABLE OF STORING PRINT DATA
IN APPARATUS MEMORY WITHOUT REQUIRING BULK MEMORY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a printing
apparatus that carries out printing by interpreting a
page description language of print data sent from a host
10 apparatus.

Description of the Related Art

Conventionally, a printer apparatus as a printing
apparatus that carries out printing by interpreting a
15 page description language of print data sent from a host
apparatus is connected on a network and prints print data
sent from a plurality of host apparatuses. When printing
a confidential document, etc. (hereinafter referred to
as "secret printing") using such a printer apparatus,
20 a technique is known which prevents printing unless a
password is entered from a panel provided on the printer
apparatus even if a host apparatus instructs that print
data should be printed.

On the other hand, print data sent from a host
25 apparatus to this type of printer apparatus is normally
written in a page description language (hereinafter
referred to as "PDL data") such as PCL of Hewlett-Packard
Company and PostScript of Adobe Systems Inc.

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The printer apparatus described above temporarily stores print data sent from the host apparatus in memory of the printer apparatus and waits for a password to be entered before printing the data, and therefore the printer apparatus needs to incorporate memory that can temporarily store the print data. At this time, the print data sent from the host apparatus is written in PDL data. The print data written in this PDL data has a structure with a plurality of layers and the volume of the print data in this case is not predictable from the number of pages, etc. of the print data. Thus, this type of printer apparatus has a problem of requiring bulk memory anticipating a case where large-volume print data is required.

15 For such memory, a hard disk, etc. is normally used. With bulk memory such as a hard disk, this printer apparatus can perform secret printing. Due to the necessity of bulk memory such as a hard disk, this type of printer apparatus has another problem of increasing the cost of apparatus.

20 Such problems can also occur in cases other than secret printing. For example, these problems may also occur when a plurality of print data pieces is sent from host apparatuses on a network simultaneously and part or the whole of such print data should be temporarily stored in memory in the printer apparatus.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a printing apparatus and printing method capable of storing print data sent from a host apparatus in memory in the apparatus without requiring bulk memory. That is, the present invention makes it possible to receive print data from the host apparatus and decide whether or not to store compressed data obtained by compressing image data of the received print data in memory; and if the compressed data should be stored in memory, predict the data volume of the compressed data and decide whether it is possible to store the compressed data of the predicted data volume in memory or not; then, if the compressed data of the predicted data volume can be stored, interpret the page description language of the print data, acquire image data and store the compressed data obtained by compressing the image data in memory. Thus, when storing the received print data in memory, the present invention predicts the data volume of the compressed data of the print data, and if the compressed data of the predicted data volume can be stored in memory, the compressed data of the print data is stored in memory. For this reason, if the compressed data of the print data can be stored in memory, the present invention can store the print data received from the host apparatus in memory of the apparatus without requiring bulk memory.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects and features of the invention will appear more fully hereinafter from a consideration of the following description taken in connection with
5 the accompanying drawing wherein one example is illustrated by way of example, in which;

FIG.1 is a schematic diagram showing a network on which a multi-function apparatus as a printing apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention
10 operates;

FIG.2 is an outlined block diagram of the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above of the present invention;

FIG.3 is a flow chart showing how the multi-function
15 apparatus according to the embodiment above receives print data from a host apparatus;

FIG.4 is a flow chart showing how the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out interpreter processing on the received print data;

20 FIG.5 is a flow chart showing how the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out coding on image data subjected to interpreter processing;

FIG.6 is a flow chart showing how the multi-function
25 apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out decoding on coded image data;

FIG.7 is a flow chart showing how the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above prints image

data;

FIG.8 illustrates a flow of print data when the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out reception processing and interpreter processing on print data;

FIG.9 illustrates a flow of image data when the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out coding processing on image data;

FIG.10 illustrates a flow of decoded data and image data when the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out decoding processing on coded data;

FIG.11 shows a specific example when the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment above carries out secret printing;

FIG.12 illustrates a process of forming PDL data characters using a conventional printer apparatus, etc.;

FIG.13 illustrates a process of forming a PDL data table using the conventional printer apparatus, etc.;

FIG.14 illustrates a process of forming PDL data marks (○ mark, etc.) using the conventional printer apparatus, etc.; and

FIG.15 illustrates a process of forming PDL data underlines using the conventional printer apparatus, etc.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

With reference now to the attached drawings, embodiments of the present invention will be explained in detail below.

5 FIG.1 is a schematic diagram showing a network on which a multi-function apparatus as a printing apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention operates.

10 Multi-function apparatus 1 has a function as a recording apparatus such as a printer, a function as a copying apparatus such as a copier and a function as an image communication apparatus such as a facsimile. As an example of use of these functions, FIG.1 shows a case where multi-function apparatus 1 is connected to a
15 plurality of host apparatuses via a plurality of different transmission paths. That is, multi-function apparatus 1 is connected to a personal computer (hereinafter referred to as "PC") 3 via parallel cable 2. Multi-function apparatus 1 is further connected to
20 scanner (separate type copier) 5 via serial cable 4 such as IEEE1394. Multi-function apparatus 1 is further connected to PC 7 and PC 8 via computer network 6 such as LAN and the Internet. Multi-function apparatus 1 is further connected to mobile PC 10 via a radio
25 communication path such as IrDA-compliant infrared communication path (hereinafter referred to as "IrDA")
9. Multi-function apparatus 1 is further connected to FAX 12 via analog/digital public switched telephone

network (hereinafter referred to as "PSTN/ISDN") 11.

This embodiment describes a case where multi-function apparatus 1 has three functions as a recording apparatus, copying apparatus and image communication apparatus. However, the present invention is not limited to this, but the multi-function apparatus of the present invention is also applicable to cases where the multi-function apparatus has any two of the three functions.

FIG.2 is an outlined block diagram of the multi-function apparatus according to the embodiment of the present invention.

Multi-function apparatus 1 stores programs to implement the functions as the recording apparatus, copying apparatus and image communication apparatus in program memory 201. CPU 202 executes these programs to implement the functions as the recording apparatus, copying apparatus and image communication apparatus.

Program memory 201 also stores a processing program that interprets PDL data of print data sent from a host apparatus (hereinafter referred to as "interpreter processing"). CPU 202 executes this program to interpret PDL data. FIG.2 shows a case where a single CPU 202 is used, but it is desirable to carry out interpreter processing using a plurality of CPUs 202 to speed up interpreter processing.

CPU 202 is connected, via bus 203, to LAN controller 204, printer controller 205, modem 206, scanner

controller 207, coder/decoder (hereinafter referred to as "CODEC") 208 and panel controller 209.

LAN controller 204 is connected to LAN or computer network 6 such as the Internet via LAN and controls data transmission/reception between this multi-function apparatus 1 and computer network 6. This allows multi-function apparatus 1 to carry out data communications with PC 7 connected on LAN or PC 8 installed in a remote place, etc.

Printer controller 205 is connected to printer section 210 and controls data transmission/reception with printer section 210. Under instructions of printer controller 205, printer section 210 prints specified print data. This allows multi-function apparatus 1 to print data through printer section 210.

Modem 206 is connected to PSTN/ISDN 11 and carries out data communications and facsimile communications via PSTN/ISDN 11. This allows multi-function apparatus 1 to carry out facsimile communications with a FAX, etc. installed in a remote place, etc.

Scanner controller 207 is connected to scanner section 211 and controls this scanner section 211. Scanner section 211 scans image data of a document under the control of scanner controller 207.

CODEC 208 encodes or decodes data read from scanner controller 207 or data received from modem 206, etc. CODEC 208 also carries out coding on the image data, which is the print data specified by the host apparatus

subjected to interpreter processing and written to a page memory that will be described later, or decoding on the coded image data.

For CODEC 208, for example, a coding/decoding
5 system whose data volume after compression is
predictable such as JBIG (Joint Bi-Level Image Experts
Group) system or MH (Modified Huffman) system is used.
In this embodiment, suppose CODEC 208 carries out
coding/decoding in compliance with the JBIG system.

10 Here, the coding/decoding system whose data volume
after compression is predictable is explained taking the
JBIG system as an example. "Data volume after
compression is predictable" means that it is possible
to predict the volume obtained by compressing data with
15 a minimum compression rate.

More specifically, a case where print data with
resolution of 600 dpi is printed to an A4 recording sheet
is explained. Generally, when coding such print data,
it is when a "checkered pattern" is specified as print
20 data that the data compression rate becomes a minimum.
Suppose the data volume before coding this "checkered
pattern" print data is approximately 2 MB. If this
"checkered pattern" is coded according to the JBIG system,
the data volume after coding is compressed to
25 approximately 1/10. In other words, for the compression
rate for the above recording sheet, approximately 1/10
is secured even in the case of data whose print data is
the most difficult one to be compressed. That is, the

data volume after coding is predicted to be 200 KB. Thus, based on the data volume per one recording sheet when the compression rate is a minimum and the total number of pages of the print data, multi-function apparatus 1
5 can predict the data volume when the compression rate is a minimum. Normally, a higher compression rate can be expected in the JBIG system, but multi-function apparatus 1 predicts the data volume after coding by only taking into account the minimum compression rate.

10 Panel controller 209 is connected to operation panel 212. The operator of multi-function apparatus 1 can send predetermined commands from this operation panel 212 to multi-function apparatus 1. Panel controller 209 controls commands or data input from this
15 operation panel 212 with CPU 202. This operation panel 212 is provided with a touch panel for the operator to input the number of copies, facsimile communication destinations addresses, etc. and a display to display them.

20 CPU 202 is also connected, via bus 203, to buffer memory 213, page memory 214 and image memory 215. These buffer memory 213, page memory 214 and image memory 215 do not have special configurations, but are normal memories to implement functions as a recording apparatus,
25 copying apparatus and image communication apparatus.

Buffer memory 213 temporarily stores data received from computer network 6 of LAN, etc. via LAN controller 204 or data to be transmitted to computer network 6 via

Page memory 214 stores image data, which is print data written in PDL data subjected to interpreter processing.

Next, the operation of multi-function apparatus 1 with such a configuration when secret printing is instructed from a host apparatus connected on LAN is explained using FIG.3 to FIG.7. FIG.3 illustrates a flow of multi-function apparatus 1 receiving print data from the host apparatus. FIG.4 illustrates a flow of multi-function apparatus 1 carrying out interpreter processing on the received print data. FIG.5 illustrates a flow of multi-function apparatus 1 coding the image data subjected to interpreter processing. FIG.6 illustrates a flow of multi-function apparatus 1 decoding the coded image data. FIG.7 illustrates a flow of multi-function apparatus 1 printing the image data.

First, the flow of multi-function apparatus 1 receiving print data from a host apparatus is explained

using FIG.3.

Normally, multi-function apparatus 1 is monitoring reception of a command from the host apparatus. When secret printing is commanded from the host apparatus, multi-function apparatus 1 receives print data via LAN controller 204 (ST 301). The print data consists of a header section and a data section.

The header section contains job information of this print data. In this case, the job information of the print data includes a message stating that this print data is secret printing, a password used for secret printing (hereinafter referred to as "secret password"), total page information of the print data and size of recording sheets, etc. On the other hand, the data section includes PDL data printed by this secret printing. This PDL data includes fonts and their point numbers for printing.

Upon reception of this print data, CPU 202 first carries out reception processing of the header section of the print data. CPU 202 analyzes the header section of the print data and decides whether the header section includes a secret password (ST 302). In this way, CPU 202 can decide the next processing based on the information included in the header section of the print data. In this case, secret printing is specified from the host apparatus and this header section includes a secret password. For this reason, CPU 202 detects the secret password. CPU 202 stores the detected secret

password in the file control area in image memory 215 (ST 303).

After storing this secret password, CPU 202 decides whether the total page information is stored in the file control area (ST 304). Since the total page information is not stored in the file control area yet, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 305. Then, CPU 202 decides whether the total page information included in the header section has been received or not (ST 305). Upon reception of the total page information, CPU 202 stores the received total page information in the file control area of image memory 215.

After storing the total page information, CPU 202 decides whether image memory 215 has a free space enough to store data of a volume predicted based on the size of the recording sheet to which the print data is printed and the corresponding minimum compression rate according to the JBIG system (ST 306). Thus, since it is decided whether image memory 215 has a free space enough to store data of a volume predicted based on the total page information, the size of the recording sheet to which the print data is printed and the corresponding minimum compression rate according to the JBIG system, it is possible to correctly decide whether data can be stored in image memory 215 or not. Here, suppose a free space enough to store predicted data exists in image memory 215.

To explain more specifically using the above

example, if 5 pages of print data with resolution of 600 dpi are printed to A4 recording sheets, CPU 202 decides whether image memory 215 has a space enough to store 1 MB data corresponding to the 5 pages, predicting that
5 a data volume of 2 MB per one page can be compressed to 1/10.

If CPU 202 decides that there is a free space to store the predicted data in image memory 215, CPU 202 decides whether interpreter processing has already been
10 started or not (ST 307). Here, since the interpreter processing has not been started yet, CPU 202 starts interpreter processing and coding/decoding processing (ST 308). This starts interpreter processing and coding/decoding processing that will be described later
15 in parallel with reception of print data.

Next, CPU 202 writes the received print data to buffer memory 213 (ST 309). At this time, CPU 202 decides whether buffer memory 213 has some free space (ST 310). If buffer memory 213 does not have enough free space,
20 CPU 202 repeats the decision in ST 310 until a predetermined time elapses. If the predetermined time has elapsed without enough free space in buffer memory 213 (ST 311), CPU 202 displays a print data reception error on the display of operation panel 212 and ends the
25 reception processing on the print data.

On the other hand, if there is a free space in buffer memory 213, CPU 202 decides whether reception of all print data has been completed (ST 312) or not. Here,

since only the header section of the print data has been subjected to reception processing, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 301.

Then, CPU 202 carries out reception processing on
5 the data section of the print data. Upon reception of the data section of the print data (ST 301), CPU 202 decides whether the data section includes a secret password or not as in the case of the reception process of the header section (ST 302). However, since the data
10 section includes no secret password, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 313.

Then, CPU 202 decides whether any secret password is stored in the file control area (ST 313). Here, since a secret password has already been stored in the file
15 control area, CPU 202 decides whether any total page information is stored in the file control area (ST 304). Here, since the total page information is stored in the file control area, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 309.

Then, CPU 202 writes the received print data to
20 buffer memory 213 as in the case of reception processing of the header section (ST 309). At this time, CPU 202 carries out the processes in ST 310 to ST 312 as in the case of the reception processing of the header section.

Furthermore, in the process in ST 312, CPU 202
25 repeats the processes in ST 301 to ST 312 until it is decided that the reception of all print data is completed. Then, in the process in ST 312, if CPU 202 decides that the reception of all print data is completed, CPU 202

ends the print data reception process.

In the process in ST 306, if CPU 202 decides that there is not a free space to store the predicted volume of data in image memory 215, CPU 202 displays a sign
5 prompting split printing of the print data on the display of operation panel 212 (ST 314) and ends the print data reception process.

Next, the flow of multi-function apparatus 1 carrying out interpreter processing of the received
10 print data is explained using FIG.4. Interpreter processing of print data is carried out when a valid image data is stored in buffer memory 213.

When carrying out interpreter processing of print data, CPU 202 first decides whether valid print data
15 exists in buffer memory 213 or not (ST 401). Here, since valid print data exists in buffer memory 213, CPU 202 reads the print data from buffer memory 213 (ST 402). If, in ST 401, valid print data does not exist in buffer memory 213, CPU 202 repeats the process in ST 401.

20 After reading the print data from buffer memory 213, CPU 202 carries out a process of converting print data to image data (hereinafter referred to as "image conversion process") (ST 403). The print data image conversion process is carried out by interpreting PDL
25 data included in the data section of the print data. Interpreting the PDL data causes the PDL data to be converted to image data.

When carrying out the image conversion process, CPU

202 decides whether there is any PDL data that cannot be interpreted (ST 404). If there is some PDL data that cannot be interpreted, CPU 202 displays a print data reception error on the display of operation panel 212 and ends the print data interpreter process.

If there is no PDL data that cannot be interpreted, CPU 202 writes image data to page memory 214 (ST 405).

At this time, CPU 202 decides whether printing of the received print data is secret printing or not by deciding whether a secret password is stored in the file control area or not (ST 406). Here, since the secret password is stored in the file control area of image memory 215, CPU 202 decides that printing of the received print data is secret printing.

When writing image data to page memory 214, CPU 202 decides whether there is any free space in page memory 214 (ST 407). If there is not enough free space in page memory 214, CPU 202 repeats the decision in ST 407 until a predetermined time elapses. If the predetermined time has elapsed without enough free space in page memory 214 (ST 408), CPU 202 displays a print data reception error on the display of operation panel 212 and ends the interpreter process of the print data.

On the other hand, if there is enough free space in page memory 214, CPU 202 decides whether image conversion of all pages of print data has been completed (ST 409) or not. Here, suppose the image conversion process has not been completed for all pages of the print

data.

Since the image conversion process has not been completed for all pages of the print data, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 401. Then, CPU 202 repeats the
5 processes in ST 401 to ST 409 until image conversion is completed for all pages of the print data. Then, in the process in ST 409, if CPU 202 decides that image conversion has been completed for all pages of the print data, CPU 202 ends the print data image conversion
10 process.

Here, in the process in ST 406, if CPU 202 decides that printing of the received print data is not secret printing, CPU 202 carries out the processes in ST 407 and ST 408 (not shown in the figure) as in the case of
15 secret printing and decides whether image conversion of all pages of print data has been completed or not (ST 410).

Then, in ST 410, if CPU 202 decides that image conversion of all pages of print data has not been
20 completed, CPU 202 repeats the processes in ST 401 to ST 406 and ST 410 until the image conversion processing on all pages of print data is completed. On the other hand, if CPU 202 decides that the image conversion processing on all pages of print data has been completed,
25 CPU 202 ends the print data image conversion process.

FIG.8 illustrates a flow of print data when carrying out the above print data reception process and interpreter process. AS shown in FIG.8, the print data

received from LAN controller 204 is passed to CPU 202 via buffer memory 213. CPU 202 carries out interpreter processing on this print data and converts this print data to image data. Then, CPU 202 stores the converted
5 image data in page memory 214.

Then, the flow of multi-function apparatus 1 coding the image data subjected to interpreter processing is explained using FIG.5. Coding processing on image data is carried out when it is decided in ST 406 that printing
10 of the received print data is secret printing.

When carrying out the coding processing on image data, CPU 202 first decides whether valid image data exists in page memory 214 or not (ST 501). Here, since valid image data exists in page memory 214, CPU 202 reads
15 the image data from page memory 214 (ST 502). If, in ST 501, valid image data does not exist in page memory 214, CPU 202 repeats the process in ST 501.

After reading the image data from page memory 214, CPU 202 carries out coding processing on image data (ST
20 503). The image data coding process is carried out by CODEC 208 according to the JBIG system. At this time, the coded image data (hereinafter referred to as "coded data") is compressed more than the volume of the image data before coding.

25 After carrying out the image data coding process, CPU 202 writes the coded data to image memory 215 (ST 504). At this time, CPU 202 decides whether enough free space exists in image memory 215 (ST 505). The coded data

is written as a file corresponding to the secret password stored in the file control area in ST 303.

Here, if there is not enough free space in image memory 215, CPU 202 decides whether or not to shift to a printing process in the event of memory over (ST 506).
5 More specifically, CPU 202 decides whether or not to shift to a printing process in the event of memory over by displaying a message indicating memory over on the display of operation panel 212 to decide the input from the operator or by deciding whether processing is preset
10 to shift to a printing process in the event of memory over.

However, since it is decided in the decision in ST 306 during the print data reception process that image memory 215 has an enough space for the print data, ST
15 506 is unlikely to result in memory over. However, considering the case where image memory 215 is consumed by the facsimile communication, copy or other functions during this print data process, CPU 202, in ST 506,
20 decides whether or not to shift to a printing process in the event of memory over.

If processing is not shifted to the printing process, CPU 202 displays a print data reception error on the display of operation panel 212 and ends the print data
25 coding process. On the other hand, if processing is shifted to the printing process, CPU 202 writes the coded data to image memory 215 as much as possible and then ends the print data coding process and waits for a command

to subject the coded data to a decoding process.

On the other hand, if an enough free space exists in image memory 215, CPU 202 decides whether the coding processing on all pages of the image has been completed or not (ST 507). Here, suppose the coding processing on all pages of the image data has not been completed yet.

Because the coding processing on all pages of the image data has not been completed, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 501. Then, CPU 202 repeats the processes in ST 501 to ST 507 until the coding processing on all pages of the image data is completed. Then, if it is decided that the coding processing on all pages of the image data has been completed in the process in ST 507, CPU 202 ends the print data coding process and waits for a command to subject the coded data to a decoding process.

FIG.9 illustrates the flow of image data when the above image data coding process is carried out. As shown in FIG.9, the image data written to page memory 214 is subjected to coding processing by CODEC 208, converted to coded data and written to image memory 215.

Next, the flow of multi-function apparatus 1 decoding the coded data is explained using FIG.6. The decoding processing on the coded data is carried out when the operator enters a secret password.

When carrying out the decoding processing on the coded data, CPU 202 first decides whether any secret password has been entered from operation panel 212 (ST

601). Here, suppose a secret password has been entered from operation panel 212. If no secret password has been entered from operation panel 212, CPU 202 repeats the process in ST 601 until some password is entered.

5 If some secret password has been entered, CPU 202 decides whether the file corresponding to the secret password entered exists in the file control area in image memory 215 (ST 602). Here, suppose the file corresponding to the secret password exists. If the file
10 corresponding to the secret password does not exist, CPU 202 shifts processing to ST 601 and repeats the processes in ST 601 and ST 602.

 If the file corresponding to the secret password exists, CPU 202 reads the file (ST 603), then reads the
15 coded data corresponding to the file from image memory 215 (ST 604).

 After reading the coded data from image memory 215, CPU 202 subjects the coded data to a decoding process (ST 605). The decoding process for the coded data is
20 carried out by CODEC 208 according to the JBIG system as in the case of the coding process. This restores the image data before coding.

 Then, CPU 202 writes the restored image data to page memory 214 (ST 606).

25 After writing the image data to page memory 214, CPU 202 decides whether the image conversion process for all pages of the coded data has been completed or not (ST 607).

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image data of the print data has been completed, printer controller 205 controls printer section 210 to print the print data. At this time, CPU 202 decides whether the process in ST 506 has been shifted to a printing process in the event of memory over (ST 704).

Here, if the process in ST 506 has been shifted to a printing process in the event of memory over, CPU 202 displays a message stating that memory over has occurred on the display of operation panel 212 (ST 705).

After displaying the message stating that memory over has occurred on the display of operation panel 212, or if the process in ST 506 has not been shifted to a printing process in the event of memory over, CPU 202 deletes the file for which the printing process has been completed (ST 706) and ends the printing process for all print data.

FIG.10 illustrates the flow of the coded data and image data when subjecting the coded data to the above decoding process. As shown in FIG.10, the coded data written to image memory 215 is subjected to a decoding process by CODEC 208, converted to image data and written to page memory 214. The image data written to page memory 214 is passed to printer section 210 via printer controller 205. Printer controller 205 controls printer section 210 to print the data.

Next, cases where secret printing is carried out for a document shown in FIG.11 using a conventional printer apparatus, etc. and multi-function apparatus 1

are explained.

When carrying out secret printing for a document shown in FIG.11, the conventional printer apparatus, etc. receives print data from a host apparatus and temporarily
5 stores the received print data in a hard disk, etc. Then, upon the input of a secret password by the operator, the printer apparatus prints the document shown in FIG.11.

When printing the document shown in FIG.11, which is written in PDL data, the conventional printer
10 apparatus, etc. prints using data written in 4 layers as shown in FIG.12 to FIG.15. That is, the conventional printer apparatus, etc. prints the document shown in FIG.11 by sequentially interpreting data written in different layers such as a layer for forming characters
15 shown in FIG.12, a layer for forming a table shown in FIG.13, a layer for forming marks (○ marks, etc.) shown in FIG.14 and a layer for forming underlines shown in FIG.15.

Here, for convenience' sake, PDL data with a
20 four-layer structure is explained. However, some PDL data may have a structure with several tens of layers. Normally, the volume of PDL data increases with the increasing number of layers and increasing volume of data written in each layer. Therefore, it is impossible to
25 predict the volume of the PDL data from the total number of pages of print data, etc. Therefore, the conventional printer apparatus, etc. implements secret printing by storing print data in a large-capacity hard disk, etc.,

having a capacity by far exceeding the data volume predicted to be printed by the operator's command.

In contrast, when carrying out secret printing of the document shown in FIG.11, multi-function apparatus 1 receives print data from the host apparatus and decides whether image memory 215 can store the coded data of the print data or not based on its total page information, etc. Then, if image memory 215 can store the coded data, multi-function apparatus 1 subjects the print data to a coding process according to the JBIG system. Then, the coded data is stored in image memory 215. Therefore, for the coded data stored in image memory 215, a compression rate of a certain value or more can be expected irrespective of the layered structure of the PDL data of the print data and it is possible to predict the data volume after compression. This makes it possible to store the print data sent from the host apparatus in the apparatus without requiring bulk memory and implement secret printing.

In this way, when carrying out secret printing, the multi-function apparatus of this embodiment predicts the data volume of coded image data of the received print data and decides whether image memory 215 has a free space enough to store the data volume. Then, if image memory 215 has a free space enough to store the data volume, the multi-function apparatus stores the coded data of the print data in image memory 215. Then, when the operator inputs a secret password, the multi-function

apparatus decodes and prints the coded data.

At this time, the coded data stored in image memory 215 is the data coded according to the coding/decoding system that can predict a minimum compression rate, such as a JBIG system. Therefore, since it is possible to predict the data volume corresponding to a minimum compression rate when carrying out coding processing, the multi-function apparatus can store image data of the print data in image memory 215 without requiring a large-capacity hard disk, etc.

Moreover, image memory 215 that stores coded data is a memory used for normal facsimile communication operation or copy operation by multi-function apparatus 1. Therefore, it is possible to implement secret printing without providing an additional large-capacity memory. Furthermore, eliminating the need for provision of an additional large-capacity memory, etc. prevents high apparatus costs.

Furthermore, when storing print data in multi-function apparatus 1, a volume of coded data is predicted based on total page information of print data, size of recording sheets for printing and corresponding minimum compression rate. This ensures the storage of coded data of print data in image memory 215.

On the other hand, if it is not possible to store data in image memory 215, multi-function apparatus 1 displays a message stating that the operator should carry out split printing, urging the next processing when it

is impossible to print all print data for secret printing.

This embodiment describes a case of secret printing where print data sent from the host apparatus is stored in memory of the apparatus. However, the present invention is not limited to cases where secret printing is carried out but is applicable to any cases where print data sent from the host apparatus needs to be stored in memory of the apparatus.

For example, if a plurality of PCs is connected on a network, the present invention is also applicable to a case where instructions for data printing are received from a plurality of PCs at a time. In this case, it is possible to encode the print data that exceeds the printing capacity and store the coded data in memory and decode the coded data and print at a timing at which it is possible to carry out printing processing.

The present invention is also applicable to a case where print data is stored in memory of the apparatus when there is no recording sheet to print the print data. In this case, it is possible to encode the print data that cannot be printed and store the coded data in memory, and decode the coded data and print when recording sheets are supplied.

Furthermore, this embodiment describes a multi-function apparatus. However, the present invention is not limited to a multi-function apparatus, but is applicable to any apparatus that has at least a printer

function.

Moreover, this embodiment describes a case where coded data is stored in image memory, which stores image data received through the facsimile function of the multi-function apparatus. However, the present invention is not limited to this, but the coded data can also be stored in other memory. Thus, even if the coded data is stored in the other memory, since the data stored is coded data, the present invention has an effect of reducing the volume of memory.

As described above, when carrying out secret printing, etc. the printing apparatus according to the present invention encodes print data received from a host apparatus and stores the coded data in memory, making it possible to store the print data sent from the host apparatus in the printing apparatus without requiring bulk memory.

The present invention is not limited to the above described embodiments, and various variations and modifications may be possible without departing from the scope of the present invention.

This application is based on the Japanese Patent Application No.2000-041742 filed on February 18, 2000, entire content of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A printing apparatus that prints print data sent from a host apparatus connected via a network, comprising:

5 a storage section including an image data area that stores image data acquired by interpreting a page description language of the print data sent from said host apparatus and a compressed data area that stores compressed data obtained by compressing said image data;

10 a first decision section that decides whether or not to store the compressed data of said print data in said compressed data area;

 a prediction section that predicts a data volume of the compressed data of said print data; and

15 a second decision section that decides whether it is possible to store or not the compressed data of the data volume predicted by said prediction section in said compressed data area.

20 2. The printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first decision section decides whether or not to store the compressed data of the print data in said compressed data area based on information added to said print data and said prediction section predicts a volume
25 of the compressed data of the print data based on the information added to said print data.

3. The printing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

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8. The printing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said first decision section decides, when no printing medium to which the image data of said print data is printed exists in the apparatus, that the compressed data of the print data should be stored in said compressed data area.

9. The printing apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising a compression/decompression section that compresses the image data of said print data and stores the compressed data in said compressed data area on one hand, and decompresses the compressed data stored in said compressed data area on the other, wherein said prediction section predicts a data volume of the compressed data of said print data based on said total number of pages and the compression rate of said compression/decompression section corresponding to the size of the printing medium to which the data is printed.

10. The printing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the compression rate of said compression/decompression section is a compression rate when the compression rate is a minimum for the size of said printing medium to which the data is printed.

25

11. The printing apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a language interpretation section that interprets a page description language of the print data

received from said host apparatus and acquires image data,
wherein said second decision section decides whether it
is possible to store or not the compressed data of the
data volume predicted by said prediction section in said
5 compressed data area and, if it is possible to store the
compressed data, instructs said language interpretation
section to subject the page description language to an
interpretation process and instructs said
compression/decompression section to carry out a
10 compression process.

12. The printing apparatus according to claim 11, further
comprising a printing section that prints image data
stored in said image data area to a printing medium,
15 wherein said compression/decompression section, when
carrying out printing processing on the compressed data
stored in said compressed data area, carries out
decompression processing on the compressed data.

20 13. The printing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
said second decision section, when it is not possible
to store the compressed data of the data volume predicted
by said prediction section in said compressed data area,
notifies this to said host apparatus.

25 14. A copying apparatus that prints print data sent from
a host apparatus connected via a network, comprising:
the printing apparatus according to claim 1; and

a copying unit that scans a document and copies the scanned image data, wherein the compressed data area of the storage section of said printing apparatus stores the image data scanned by said copying unit.

5

15. An image communication apparatus that prints print data sent from a host apparatus connected via a network, comprising:

the printing apparatus according to claim 1; and
10 an image communication unit that transmits/receives image data via a communication line, wherein the compressed data area of the storage section of said printing apparatus stores the image data transmitted/received by said image communication unit.

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16. A multi-function apparatus that prints print data sent from a host apparatus connected via a network, comprising:

the printing apparatus according to claim 1;
20 an image communication unit that transmits/receives image data via a communication line; and

a copying unit that scans a document and copies the scanned image data, wherein the compressed data area of
25 said printing apparatus stores the image data transmitted/received by said image communication unit and image data scanned by said copying unit.

17. A printing apparatus that prints print data sent from a host apparatus connected via a network, wherein image data is created by interpreting a page description language of the print data received from said host
5 apparatus and said image data is compressed according to a compression system that can predict a data volume after compression of said image data, and stored.

18. A method for printing print data sent from a host
10 apparatus connected via a network, comprising the steps of:

receiving print data from said host apparatus;

deciding whether or not to store compressed data obtained by compressing image data of the received print
15 data in a compressed data area of a storage section;

predicting a data volume of said compressed data if the compressed data should be stored in said compressed data area;

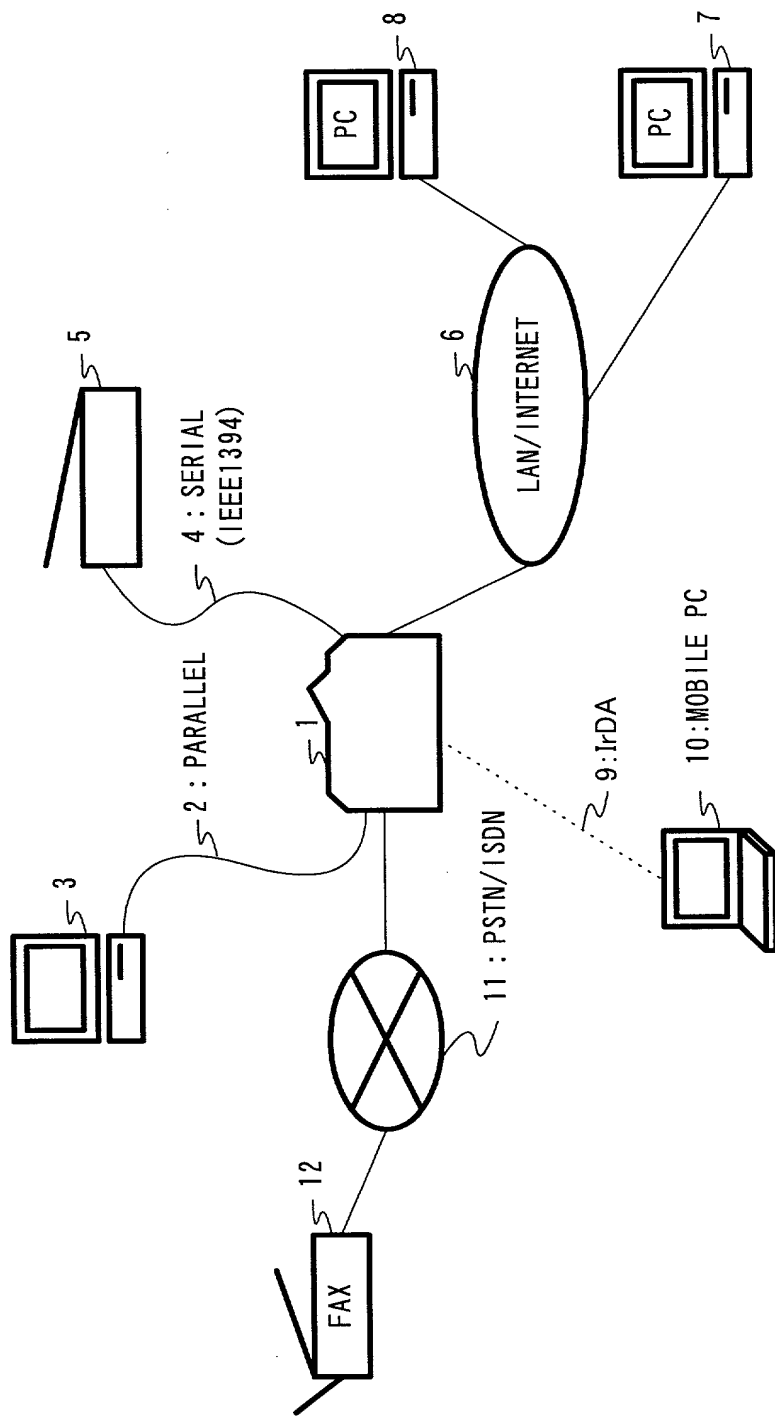
deciding whether it is possible or not to store the
20 compressed data of the predicted data volume in said compressed data area;

interpreting the page description language of said print data and acquiring image data before printing said print data if it is possible to store the compressed data
25 of the predicted data volume, and storing the compressed data obtained by compressing the image data in said compressed data area.

[illegible]

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention makes it possible to receive
5 print data from the host apparatus and decide whether
or not to store compressed data obtained by compressing
image data of the received print data in memory; and if
the compressed data should be stored in memory, predict
the data volume of the compressed data and decide whether
10 it is possible to store the compressed data of the
predicted data volume in memory or not; then, if the
compressed data of the predicted data volume can be
stored, interpret the page description language of the
print data, acquire image data and store the compressed
15 data obtained by compressing the image data in memory.
Thus, when storing the received print data in memory,
the present invention predicts the data volume of the
compressed data of the print data, and if the compressed
data of the predicted data volume can be stored in memory,
20 the compressed data of the print data is stored in memory.
For this reason, if the compressed data of the print data
can be stored in memory, the present invention can store
the print data received from the host apparatus in memory
of the apparatus without requiring bulk memory.



PRIOR ART

FIG. 1

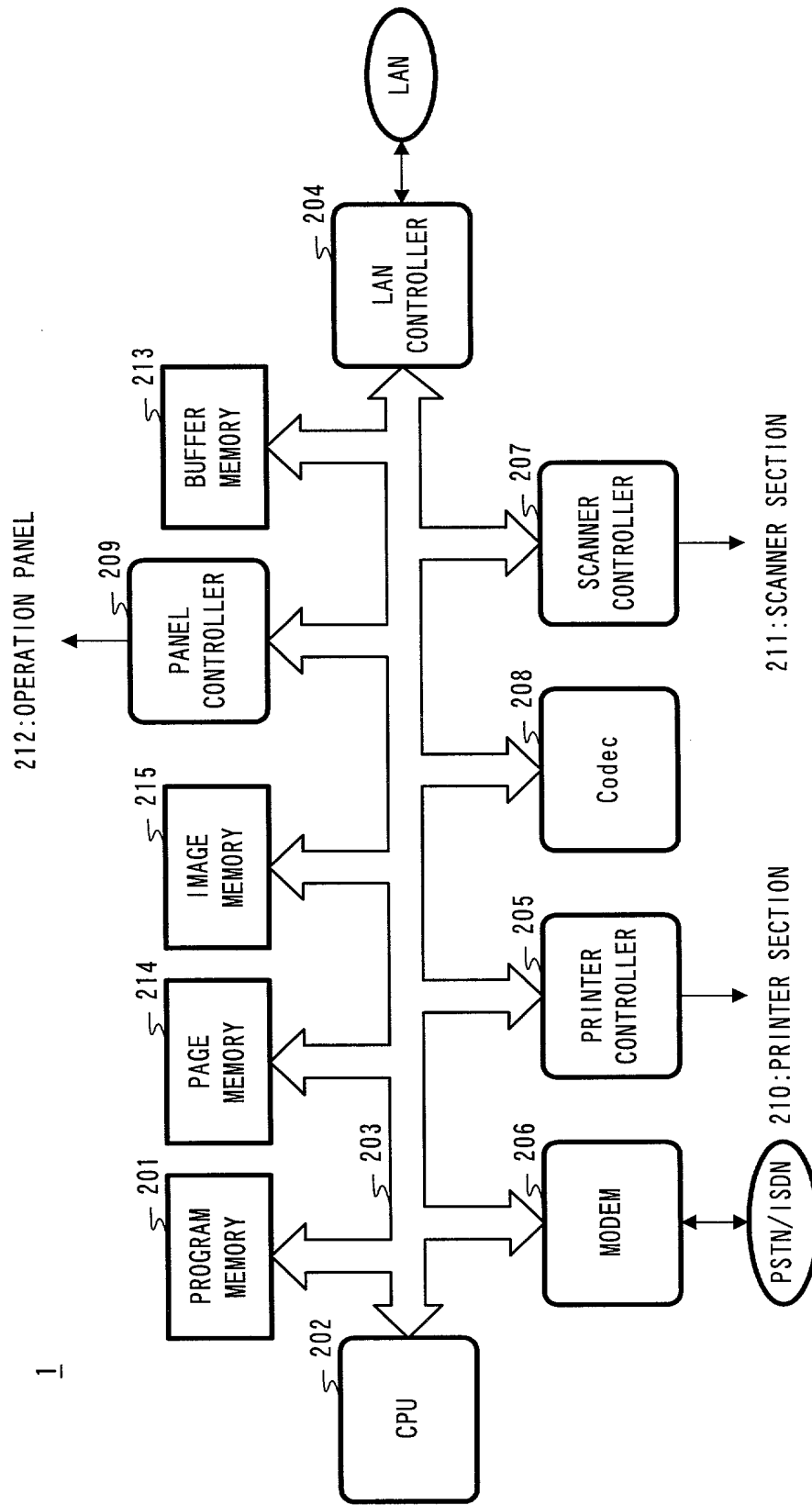


FIG. 2

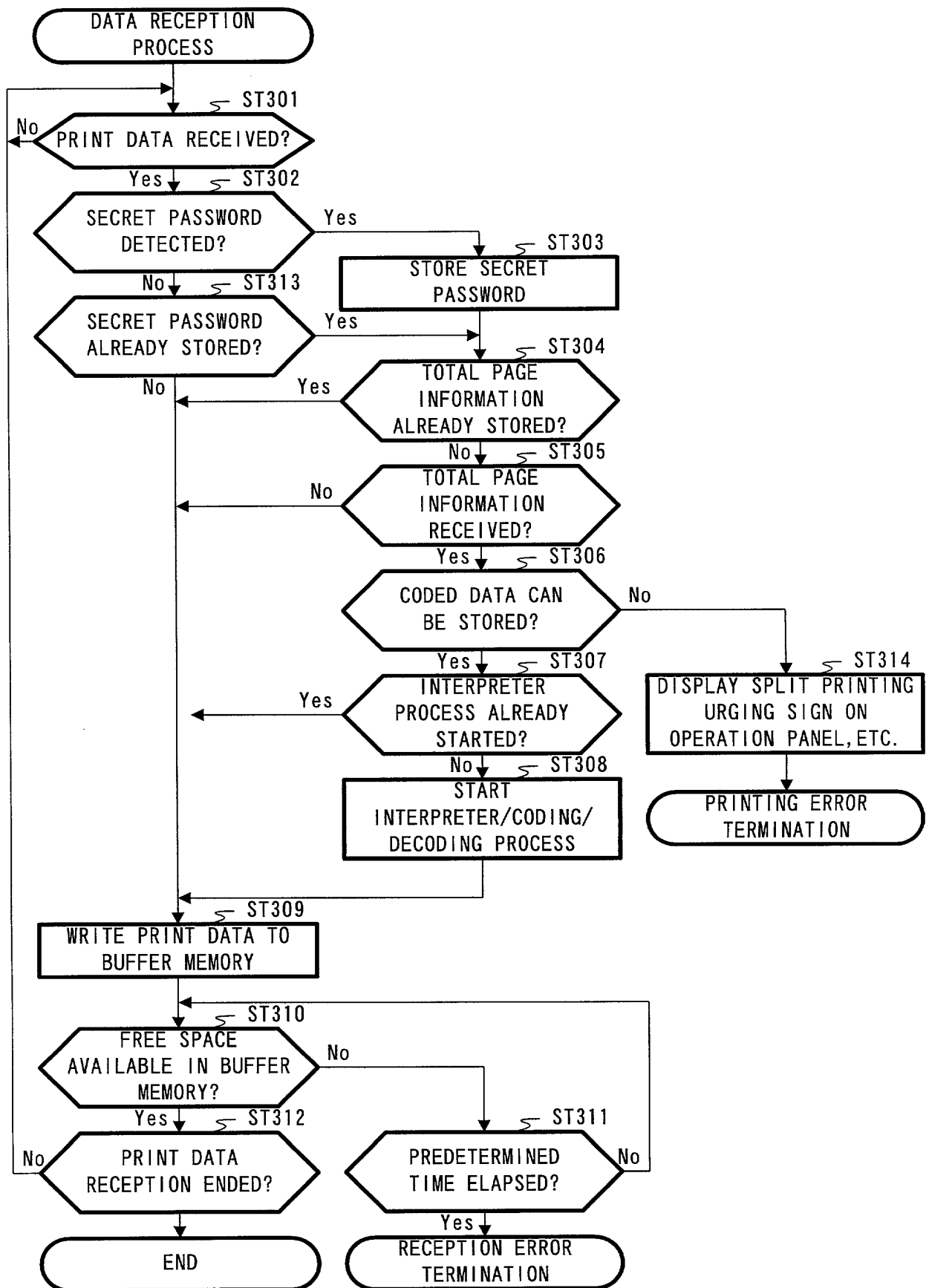


FIG. 3

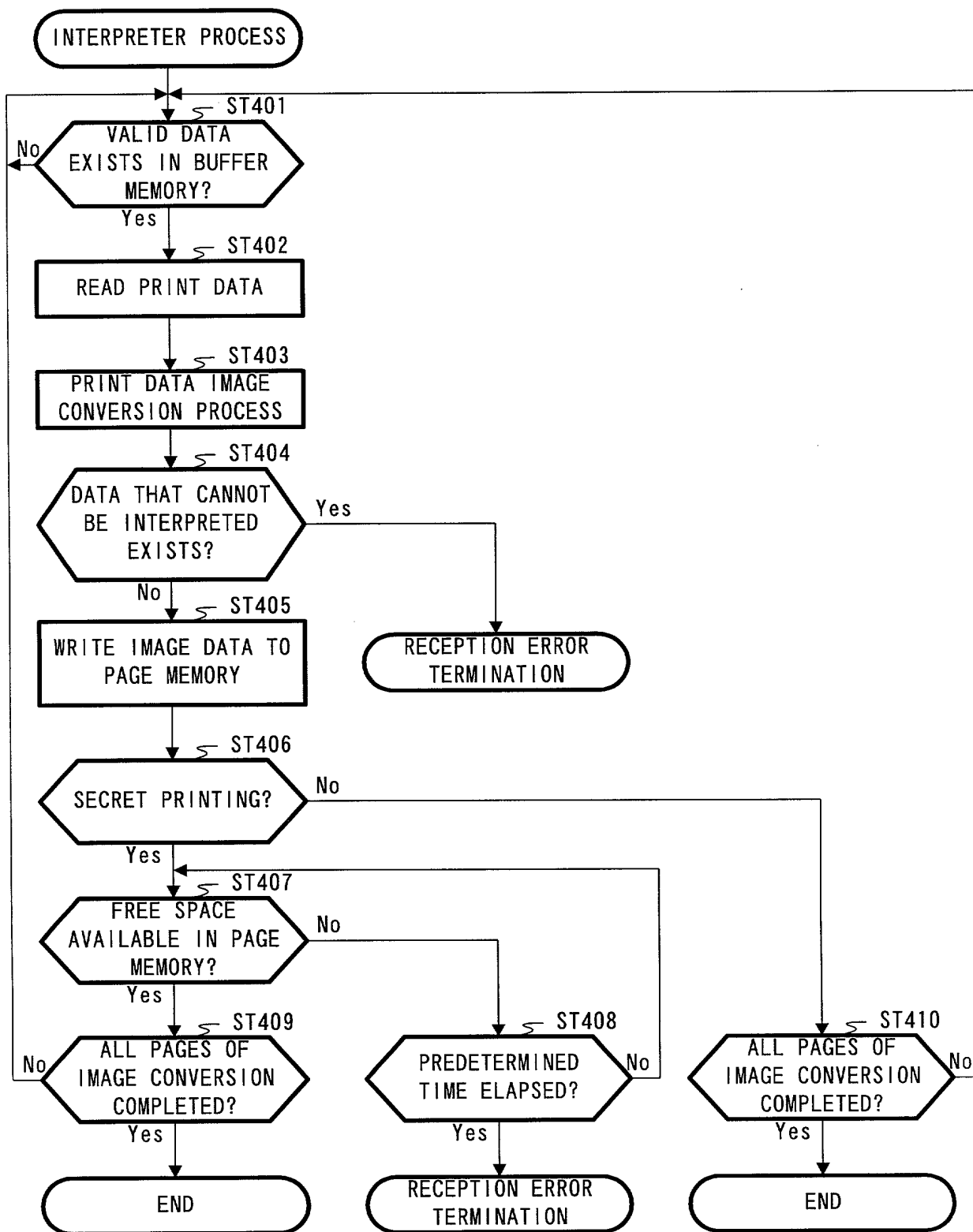


FIG. 4

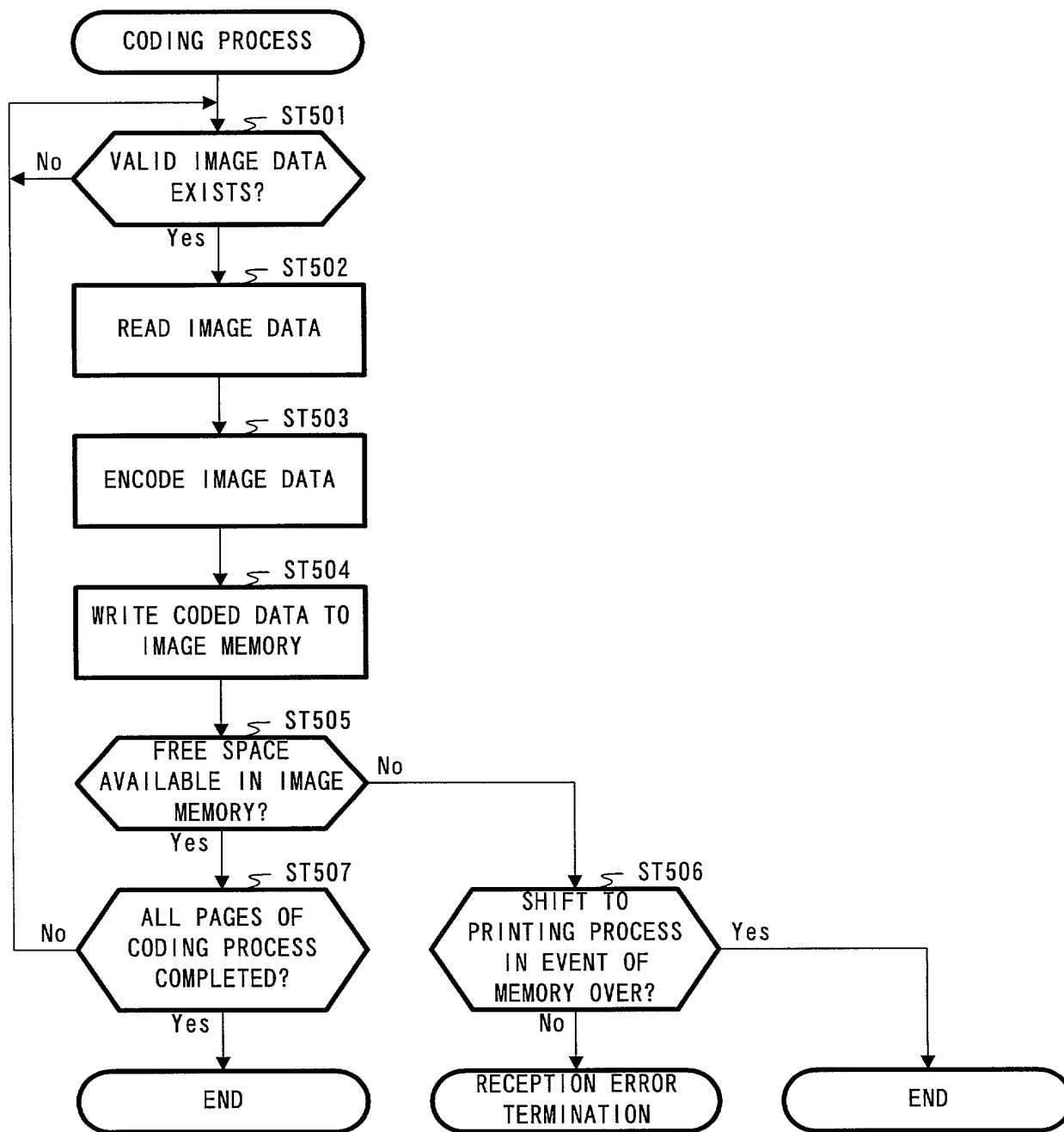


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

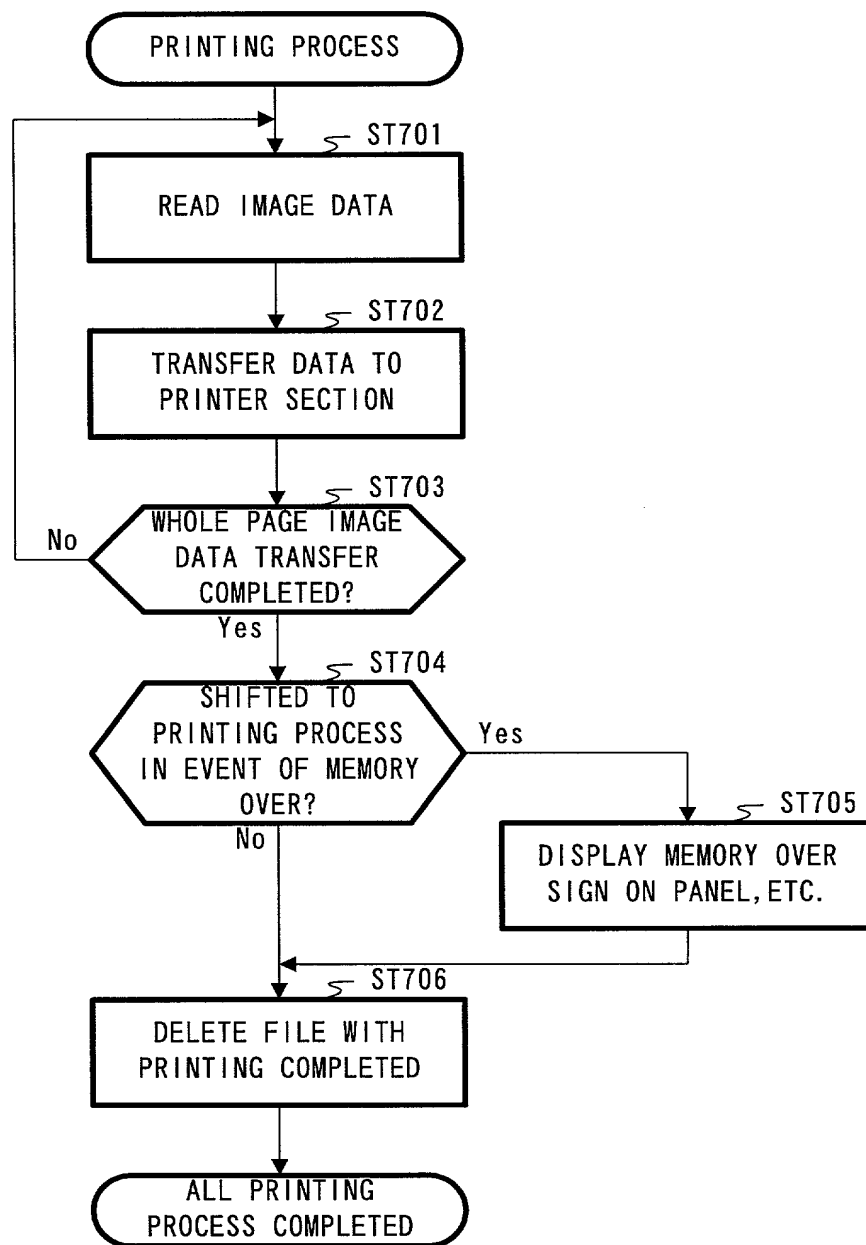


FIG. 7

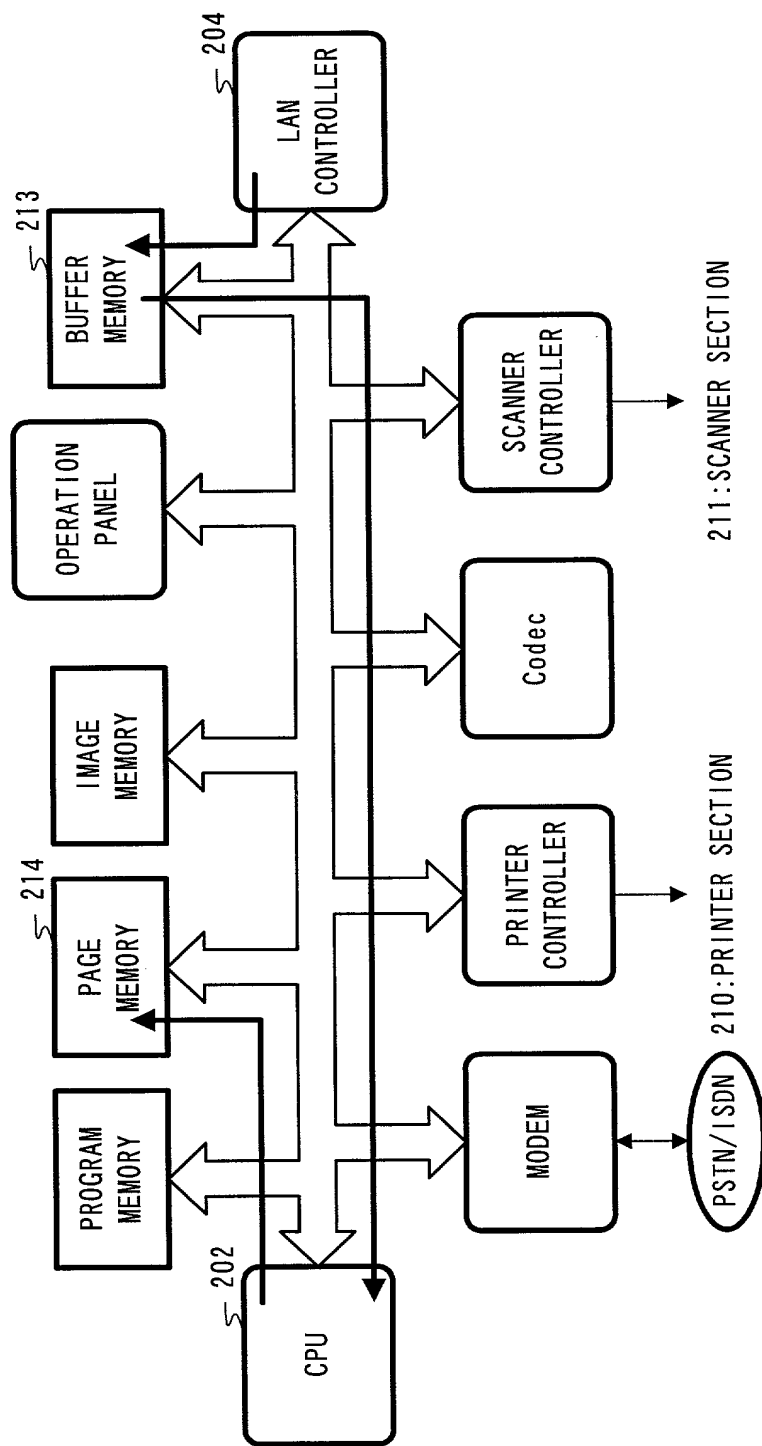


FIG. 8

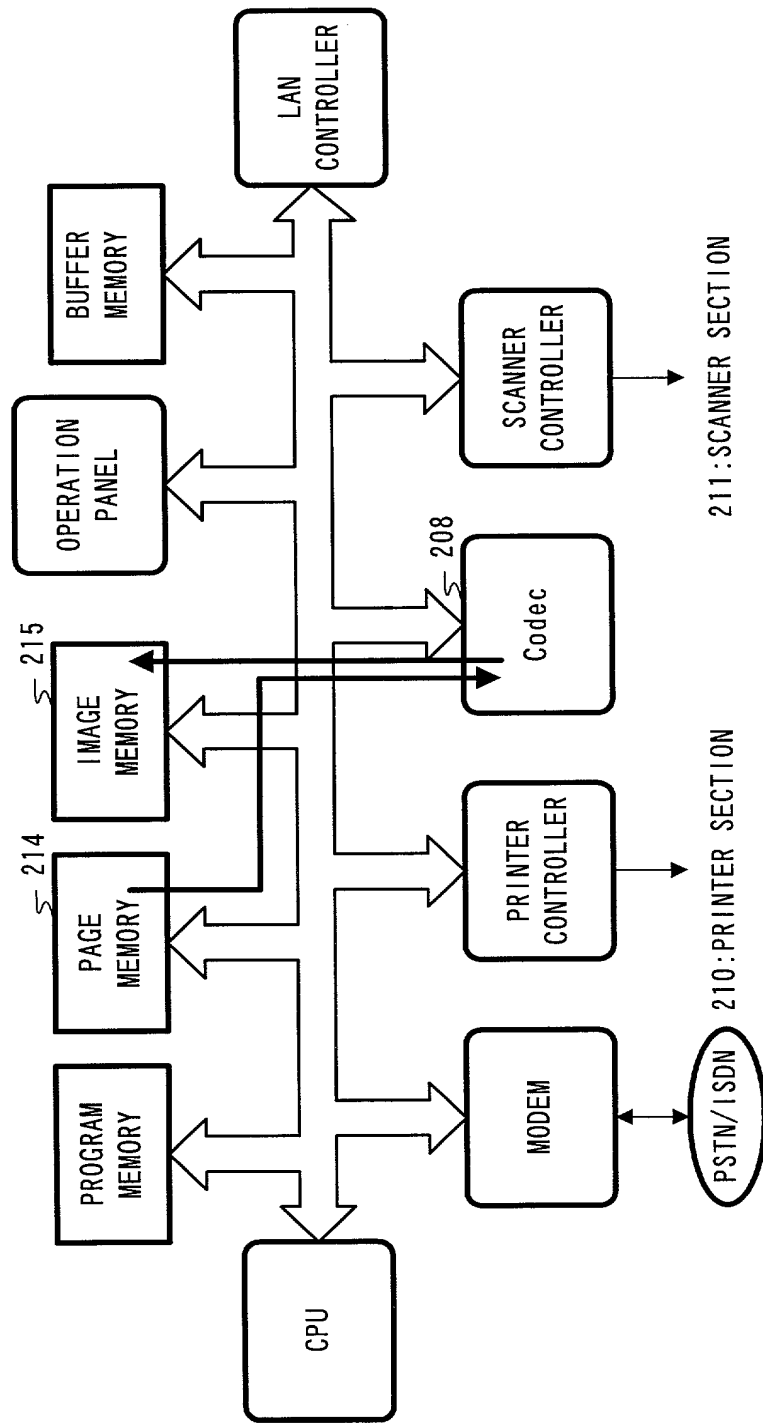


FIG. 9

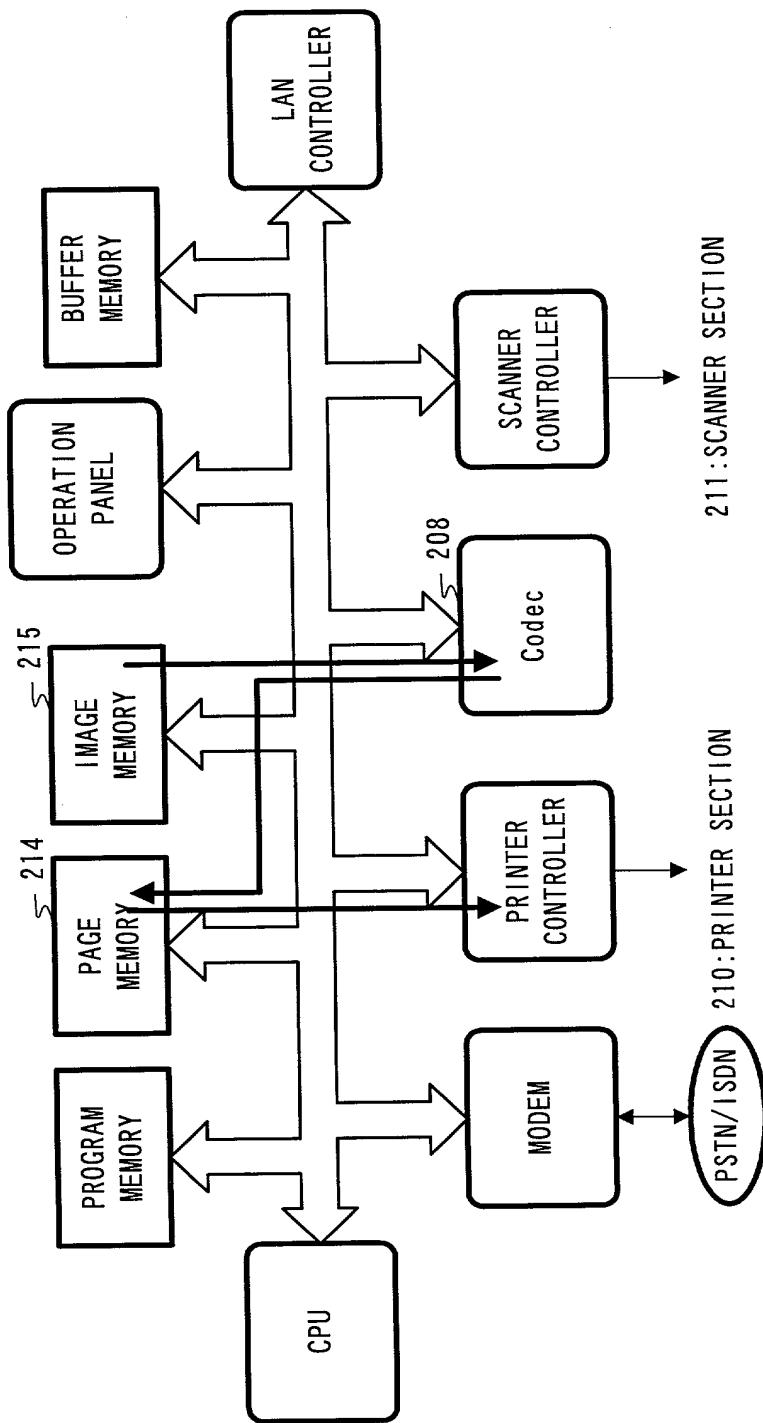


FIG. 10

ENCIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING ITEMS BELOW:

QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET

BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	PRESENT ADDRESS
<u>TOKYO</u> , OSAKA, KYOTO	TWENTIES, <u>THIRTIES</u> , FORTIES	<u>MALE</u> , FEMALE	SAME AS BIRTHPLACE, <u>MOVED</u>

NAME : _____

COMMENT : _____

FIG. 11

ENCIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING ITEMS BELOW:

QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET

BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	PRESENT ADDRESS
TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO	TWENTIES, THIRTIES, FORTIES	MALE, FEMALE	SAME AS BIRTHPLACE, MOVED

NAME :

COMMENT :

FIG. 12

ENCIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING ITEMS BELOW:

QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET

BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	PRESENT ADDRESS
TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO	TWENTIES, THIRTIES, FORTIES	MALE, FEMALE	SAME AS BIRTHPLACE, MOVED

NAME :

COMMENT :

FIG. 13

ENCIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING ITEMS BELOW:

QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET

BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	PRESENT ADDRESS
(TOKYO), OSAKA, KYOTO	TWENTIES, (THIRTIES), FORTIES	(MALE), FEMALE	SAME AS BIRTHPLACE, (MOVED)

NAME :

COMMENT :

FIG. 14

ENCIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING ITEMS BELOW:

QUESTIONNAIRE SHEET			
BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	PRESENT ADDRESS
<u>TOKYO</u> , OSAKA, KYOTO	TWENTIES, <u>THIRTIES</u> , FORTIES	<u>MALE</u> , FEMALE	SAME AS BIRTHPLACE, <u>MOVED</u>
NAME : _____			
COMMENT : _____			

FIG. 15

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Utility or Design Patent Application

特許出願宣言書

Japanese Language Declaration

私は、下欄に氏名を記載した発明者として、以下のとおり宣言する:

私の住所、郵便の宛先および国籍は、下欄に氏名に続いて記載したとおりであり、

名称の発明に関し、請求の範囲に記載した特許を求める主題の本来の、最初にして唯一の発明者である(一人の氏名のみが下欄に記載されている場合)か、もしくは本来の、最初にして共同の発明者である(複数の氏名が下欄に記載されている場合)と信じ、

上記発明の明細書(下記の欄でX印がついていない場合は、本書に添付)は、

☐ 年 月 日に提出され、
米国出願番号 として、
(該当する場合) 年 月 日に訂正されました。又は、

特許協定条約国際出願番号 として、
(該当する場合) 年 月 日に訂正されました。

私は、前期のとおり補正した請求の範囲を含む前記明細書の内容を検討し、理解したことを陳述する。

私は、連邦規則法典第37編第1条第56項定義されるとおり、特許資格の有無について重要な情報を開示すべき義務があることを認めます。

私は合衆国法典第35部第119条(a-d)項又は第365条(b)項に基づく、下記の外国特許出願又は発明者証出願、或いは第365条(a)項に基づく、少なくとも米国以外の1ヶ国を指名したPCT国際出願の外国優先権を主張し、更に優先権の主張に係わる基礎出願の出願日前の出願日を有する外国特許出願、又は発明者証出願或いはPCT国際出願を以下に"なし"の箱に印をつけることにより明記する:

Prior foreign applications
先の外国出願

JP 2000-041742
(Number)
(番号)

JAPAN
(Country)
(国名)

18/February/2000
(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願の年月日)

(Number)
(番号)

(Country)
(国名)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願の年月日)

(Number)
(番号)

(Country)
(国名)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願の年月日)

☐ その他の外国特許出願番号は別紙の追補優先権欄にて記載する。

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

PRINTING APPARATUS CAPABLE OF STORING

PRINT DATA IN APPARATUS MEMORY

WITHOUT REQUIRING BULK MEMORY

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on _____ as
United States Application Number _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable) or,

PCT International Application Number _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code §119(a-d) or §365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or §365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below. I have also identified below, by checking the "No" box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Priority claimed
優先権の主張

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No
あり	なし
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No
あり	なし
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No
あり	なし

☐ Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto.

Japanese Language Utility or Design Patent Application Declaration

私は、合衆国法典第35部第119条(e)項に基づく、下記の合衆国仮特許出願の利益を主張する。

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application Number)
(番号)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
出願の年月日

(Application Number)
(番号)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
出願の年月日

(Application Number)
(番号)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
出願の年月日

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☐ Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto.

私は、合衆国法典第35部第120条に基づく下記の合衆国特許出願、又は第365条(c)項に基づく合衆国を指名したPCT国際出願の利益を主張し、本願の請求の範囲各項に記載の主題が合衆国法典第35部第112条第1項規定の態様で、先の合衆国特許出願又はPCT国際出願に開示されていない限度において、先の出願の出願日と本願の国内出願日又はPCT国際出願日の間に有効となった連邦規則法典第37部第1章第56条に記載の特許要件に所要の情報を開示すべき義務を有することを認める。

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code §120 of any United States application(s), or §365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願の年月日)

(現況)
(特許済み、係属中、放棄済み)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願の年月日)

(現況)
(特許済み、係属中、放棄済み)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

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☐ Additional U. S. or international application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto.

私は、ここに自己の知識にもとづいて行った陳述がすべて真実であり、自己の有する情報および信ずるところに従って行った陳述が真実であると信じ、さらに故意に虚偽の陳述等を行った場合、合衆国法典第18部第1001条により、罰金もしくは禁錮に処せられるか、またはこれらの刑が併科され、またかかる故意による虚偽による陳述が本願ないし本願に対して付与される特許の有効性を損なうことがあることを認識して、以下の陳述を行ったことを宣言する。

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

私、下記署名者は、ここに記載の米国弁護士または代理人に本出願に関し特許商標庁にて取られるいかなる行為に関して、同米国弁護士又は代理人が、私に直接連絡なしに私の外国弁護士或いは法人代表者からの指示を受け取り、それに従うようここに委任する。この指示を出す者が変更の場合には、ここに記載の米国弁護士又は代理人にその旨通知される。

The undersigned hereby authorizes the U.S. attorney or agent named herein to accept and follow instructions from either his foreign patent agent or corporate representative, if any, as to any action to be taken in the Patent and Trademark Office regarding this application without direct communication between the U.S. attorney or agent and the undersigned. In the event of a change in the persons from whom instructions may be taken, the U.S. attorney or agent named herein will be so notified by the undersigned.

Japanese Language Utility or Design Patent Application Declaration

委任状: 私は、下記発明者として、下記に明記された顧客番号を伴う以下の弁護士又は、代理人をここに選任し、本順の手続きを遂行すること並びにこれに関する一切の行為を特許商標庁に対して行うことを委任する。そして全ての通信はこの顧客番号宛に発送される。

顧客番号 7055

現在選任された弁護士は下記の通りである。

Neil F. Greenblum
Bruce H. Bernstein
James L. Rowland
Arnold Turk

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the attorney(s) and/or agent(s) associated with the Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith, and direct that all correspondence be addressed to that Customer Number:

CUSTOMER NUMBER 7055

The appointed attorneys presently include:

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Reg. No. 29,027
Reg. No. 32,674
Reg. No. 33,094

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国籍	Citizenship Japan
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第二の共同発明者の氏名 (該当する場合)	Full name of second joint inventor, if any
同第二共同発明者の署名	Second Inventor's signature
住所	Residence
国籍	Citizenship
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address

(第三またはそれ以降の共同発明者に対しても同様な情報および署名を提供すること。)

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors.)